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ABSTRACT

Whereas political inequality was once seen as the key element of the American race problem, today the problem can be seen in terms of social and economic disparities. Three general socioeconomic classes have emerged in the United States, a middle class, a working class, and a poverty-stricken class. The status of African Americans can no longer be defined solely in racial terms, as considerations of race and class now merge. It is asserted that one can no longer talk meaningfully about the problems of African Americans without taking class into account. A prescription is then presented for solving the problem that is sensitive to both race and class. The more general message is that a new form of self-help, and particularly, the teaching of racial survival skills and self-help to youth, offers the best hope for improving socioeconomic conditions among African Americans, whether these conditions result from racial subordination or class subordination. In either case, issues of education, racial integration, school desegregation, and the self-esteem of youth must be addressed. African Americans must stop waiting for the government to rescue them, because the simple fact is that the government will not fulfill its civil rights promises. A preface examines race issues in light of the Clarence Thomas Supreme Court nomination. (Contains 302 references.) (SLD)

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